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SCIENCE & GOVERNMENT REPORT

The Independent Bulletin of Science Policy

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Another Budget Boost for Basic Research

The essence of the R&D portion of the President's new budget is that it aims to be relatively generous to basic research — thus continuing the Ford-initiated rescue operation for academic science; at the same time, applied research and development are mainly held to cost-of-living increases.

The overall numbers are, of course, astronomical, totaling $29.7 billion in planned R&D outlays for fiscal year 1980, which begins next October 1. Since, on the inside pages, we present, in great detail, past, present, and proposed figures on spending for multitudinous sub-categories in the federal government's R&D programs, we will confine ourselves here to the policy intent and the politics of the President's R&D budget.

The first thing to note is that Mr. Carter has repeatedly said that the US is underinvesting in basic research and that the government ought to do something about it. The budget that he presented shortly after taking office, in January 1977, was almost wholly a Ford budget, but last year at this time, when Mr. Carter presented a budget entirely of his own making, the theme of boosting basic research was prominent in his spending plans to the extent of a "real" increase of nearly five per cent. That figure, which matched up with a policy of increases that Mr. Ford inaugurated for basic research, was intended to restore some growth to basic research spending so as to overcome the effects of inflationary erosion and niggardly budgets that had characterized the Johnson and Nixon administrations.

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As things turned out, the increase for basic fell somewhat short of the planned figure because of some Congressional snipping as well as a higher-than-expected inflation rate (SGR Vol. VIII, No. 21). But the President's commitment to rejuvenating the finances of basic research is both durable and almost unique in recent times. John F. Kennedy had a go-go attitude toward R&D and he, too, boosted the money for basic research, but it was not until Gerald Ford took office, and his Science Adviser, H. Guyford Stever, took to firing up Vice President Nelson Rockefeller on the importance of basic research, that government spending again turned significantly upward.

The Ford and Carter commitments to basic research did not originate in any romantic attachment to scientific inquiry. Rather, as with so much else in the contemporary scientific realm, utility—with a heavy emphasis on industrial and military purposes — was the source of inspiration, as can be seen from the reference to basic research that Mr. Carter made in his budget message to Congress last week:

". . . I believe that the Federal Government must lead the way in investing in the Nation's future. This budget, therefore, continues my policy of providing real growth in Federal support of basic research. This support amounts to a relatively small part of the total budget — $4.6 billion in 1980 — but it is vital to the future of our Nation. The knowledge created through basic research holds the potential for breakthroughs to the solution of problems we face or may face in such critical areas as agriculture, health, environment, energy, defense, and the overall productivity of our economy. Higher productivity gains in the future, moreover, will make an important contribution to reducing inflation."

These kind and hopeful words about basic research—coming with an increase in outlays of $460

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In Brief

A top official of the Office of Management and Budget tells SGR that presidential Science Adviser Frank Press "talked us into some last-minute extra money for basic research" in the newly issued budget. Among White House staffers it is frequently said of Press that his advice is trustworthy and that it need never be feared that he's working with concealed motives.

The long-gestating Foundation for International Technological Cooperation (SGR Vol. VIII, No. 8) is listed in the new budget for $25 million. But additional funds, drawn from some existing foreign-aid programs, are slated for the proposed agency if and when Congress authorizes its existence.

New Organization: The Association for Women in Computing, created to promote communication among and professional opportunities for women in that profession. Membership open to all interested in that goal, including men. For additional information: Anita Cochran, 5A137 Bell Laboratories, Murray Hill, NJ 07974; tel. (201) 582-7818.

. . . Research Well Treated in Austere Year

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million, or 12 percent, over FY 1979 spending— are best appreciated when viewed against the opening words of the budget message: "This budget. . .is lean and austere. It recommends a spending level well below that suggested by the momentum of recent Federal spending. It will disappoint those who seek expanded Federal efforts across the board."

Apart from being a warming measure of Mr. Carter's high regard for basic research, what does the budget really mean in terms of its effects on government activities?

The answer is that by the time next October 1 rolls around, many changes will have been wrought, mainly by Congress—which last year added $740 million to the Administration's R&D requests, while cutting $425 million—and also by the Administration itself. Thus, the budget that Mr. Carter sent to Congress is not—as it is often erroneously regarded—the masterplan of the US Government; rather, it is a serious proposal, but one that is subject to any amount of change by the legislative branch of government.

The fact that this is so invites attention to an important element in the politics of presidential budget-writing, namely, that various ploys are written into the budget in anticipation of Congressional predilections. Consider, for example, the currently peculiar situation of the National Institutes of Health, for which the President's 1980 budget provides not only no increase, but an actual reduction of $18 million from the present annual budget authority. Now, the reason for this, quite simply, is that Congress almost invariably chooses to give NIH a good deal more money than is requested by the Administration. Last year, for example, the Congressional verdict was $3.2 billion,

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Federal R&D Obligations by Agency

(Millions of Dollars)

Agency	FY 1978	FY 1979 est.	FY 1980 est.	Average Annual Percent Change 1979-80	Percent Change 1979-80
Total	26,237	29,379	30,620	+ 8.0	+ 4.2
DOD	11,520	12,961	13,842	+ 9.6	+ 6.8
DOE	4,237	4,642	4,665	+ 4.9	+ .5
NASA	3,875	4,392	4,540	+ 8.2	+ 3.4
HEW	3,199	3,685	3,721	+ 7.9	+ 1.0
NSF	749	819	910	+10.3	+11.1
USDA	608	667	664	+ 4.6	- .5
EPA	385	400	436	+ 6.4	+ 8.8
Interior	357	390	377	+ 2.7	- 3.5
DOT	372	381	357	- 2.0	- 6.1
Commerce	268	308	310	+ 7.4	+ .6
All others	668	734	797	+ 9.2	+ 8.6

Sources: National Science Foundation; Office of Management and Budget

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Federal Basic Research Obligations By Agency

(Millions of Dollars)

Agency	FY 1978	FY 1979 est.	FY 1980 est.	Average Annual Percent Change 1978-80	Percent Change 1979-80
Total	3,635	4,210	4,589	+12.4	+ 9.0
HEW	1,269	1,561	1,581	+11.6	+ 1.3
NIH	1,156	1,419	1,435	+11.4	+ .5
NSF	678	741	828	+10.5	+11.8
NASA	478	530	630	+14.7	+18.8
DOE	414	469	551	+15.3	+17.3
DOD	311	373	436	+18.3	+16.7
USDA	228	252	268	+ 8.4	+ 6.2
Interior	156	176	174	+ 5.4	- 1.4
All others	99	106	121	+10.3	+14.0
Total minus new	2,366	2,649	3,008	+12.7	+13.5

Sources: National Science Foundation; Office of Management and Budget

. . . Press Spells out Some Policy Guidelines

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which was nearly $352 million above the President's figure. So, this year NIH gets nothing extra—which would mean, if it actually happened, that the biomedical research empire would be losing financial ground because of inflation. Atop that, it's actually slated for a little cut in dollars.

Even allowing for conservative makeup of the new Congress and the Proposition 13 delirium running loose through the nation, it is extraordinarily doubtful that the Congress will easily abandon the ancient preference for annually providing more money for health-related research. The NIH financial record does include a few downs, rather than ups, during the Nixon years, but those cuts evoked violent Congressional antagonism; furthermore, they inspired the health-research lobby to a standing mobilization that a re-election seeking President is not likely to ignore.

Presiding at a news briefing on the R&D segment of the budget, Presidential Science Adviser Frank Press spelled out what amounts to as much of a science policy as has ever been enunciated by Presidential assistant. As stated in a press release that closely matched his news conference comments, Press said that "the government approach continues to be that of focusing its investment in R&D to meet direct Federal needs, general economic and social needs, and specific national needs where the government seeks to augment, but not supplant, the R&D efforts of the private sector.

"An example of each of these three categories," the statement continued, "would be national defense, basic research in medicine, and the development of a new energy technology. An important element of Federal budgeting involves funding those research areas where the pay-off may be distant and those development projects where the initial costs and risks might prohibit private investment. When such projects reach a development or demonstration stage where industry investment is feasible and attractive, federal support should be phased out and the private sector take over."

What the statement neglected to cover explicitly was that the boost for basic research is actually coming out of the pockets of applied and developmental research. The arithmetic for this conclusion is difficult to prove, since there is no such thing as a US Government budget for research and development; virtually all the figures within that commonly used category are actually components of the budgets of agencies that, among other things, support research as a tool for getting things done.

Nevertheless, custom and politics dictate that, even if it doesn't make too much sense, all research and development are bunched together for statistical purpose, and Washington budget watchers routinely assess the collective annual ups and downs of the bunch. Looking

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. . . Energy Dept. Raises Basic by 17 Per Cent

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at it this way, which is how it gets looked at in the capital, what has to be noted is that FY 1980 outlays for R&D are budgeted to go up by 7.6 per cent—which is just about the estimated inflation rate for the coming fiscal year. At the same time, however, the outlays for basic research are scheduled to rise by 12 per cent. But assuming that Congress will not allow the Administration to let the NIH budget remain at this year's level, the basic research increase is likely to be even greater than that.

Of special interest, then, is the question of what's being trimmed in applied and developmental research so as to underwrite that extra help that Mr. Carter wants for basic research.

Since it is not possible to put tracers on the money, it cannot be said with certainty that this specific item is going up because that specific item is going down. However, the consanguinity between some of these movements is quite clear. For example, the Department of Energy—whose neglect of long-term research has drawn considerable criticism—is scheduled to increase its basic-research budget by 17 per cent; at the same time, it will be cutting back on various advanced technology programs that are considered ripe for commercialization. The same pattern of holding the line, or cutting back, on advanced technology and demonstration programs is to be found in other agencies that are budgeting increases for basic research.

With the exception of the peculiar budget situation at NIH the Administration's spending plans for basic research are about as generous as the academic community could hope for at this time.

The increases that Mr. Carter is recommending are not going to extricate university-based research from the financial doldrums that have afflicted it for nearly a decade. One reason is that while the Administration tends to take pride in its designs to keep academic-science funding ahead of the official inflation rate, it is almost surely the case that research is afflicted by its own special, and higher, inflation rate.

But it is now clearly established that the President cares about the well-being of academic science, that he is responsive to Science Adviser Press's recommendations for the care and feeding of university laboratories, and that at a time when there is a great clamor for less spending, basic research is one of the few activities in the federal budget for which a sizable increase has been proposed. —DSG

Committee of Concerned Scientists

Max Gottesman, of the National Institutes of Health, and Mark Kac, of Rockefeller University, have been elected co-chairmen of the 4000-member Committee of Concerned Scientists, succeeding Peter Perhan, of Harvard, and Robert Adelstein, of NIH.

Federal R&D Outlays to Universities and Colleges by Agency

(Millions of Dollars)

Agency	FY 1978	FY 1979 est.	FY 1980 est.	Average Annual Percent Change 1978-80	Percent Change 1979-80
Total	3,067	3,358	3,692	+ 9.7	+10.0
HEW	1,595	1,739	1,931	+10.0	+11.0
NIH	1,398	1,528	1,686	+ 9.8	+10.3
NSF	508	563	631	+11.4	+12.1
DOD	294	317	359	+10.5	+13.0
DOE	225	238	250	+ 5.5	+ 5.2
USDA	156	177	179	+ 7.3	+ .9
NASA	132	131	136	+ 1.5	+ 3.8
All others	157	193	206	+14.5	+ 6.7

Sources: National Science Foundation; Office of Management and Budget

Carter Seeks First Billion Budget for NSF

As the federal agency that is primarily concerned with the support of academic basic research, the National Science Foundation is once again sharing in the general budgetary uplift for fundamental science. And, if Congress goes along with the Administration's design—which calls for increasing the present NSF budget by $77.6 million—the Foundation will break the billion-dollar barrier for the first time in its nearly 30-year history.

As is the case with most other research-supporting agencies, NSF is budgeted in FY 1980 to provide a relatively large boost for basic research, while holding most of its other activities close to a stay-even level with inflation. Thus, the total budget of the Foundation is listed for an 8.4 per cent increase, which would put it just $6 million above the billion-dollar mark. But within that big figure, basic research would go up by $87.3 million, or 11.8 per cent.

Of special interest to the academic community is that, in response to numerous pleas for help, the Foundation has budgeted a big increase in funds for research instrumentation and equipment, for a total of $81.6 million, which is $27.2 million above the amount that it is spending for this purpose in the current fiscal year.

Carrying far less money, but great growth potential, is a new, Congressionally mandated research effort related to nutrition—which is currently politically popular in Washington, and likely to become more so. NSF's involvement calls for about $1.1 million to be spent for studies of the effects of processing on food, plus another $750,000 for unsolicited proposals for nutrition research.

Basic numbers concerning the NSF budget are in the table below:

OTA Priority List

The Office of Technology Assessment now has available for the asking copies of *OTA Priorities 1979,* a 30-item list of problems that OTA hopes to examine in the course of its advisory services to the Congress (SGR Vol. VIII, No. 16).

Copies are available without charge from: Public Affairs Office, Office of Technology Assessment, US Congress, Washington, DC 20510.

NSF Research and Related Activities Appropriation

(Dollars in Millions)

Budget Activity	Actual FY 1978	Current Plan FY 1979	Budget Request FY 1980	Difference FY 1980/79 Amount	Difference FY 1980/79 Percent
Mathematical & Physical Sciences & Engineering	$248.5	$267.7	$295.7	$28.8	10.5%
Astronomical, Atmospheric, Earth, & Ocean Sciences	211.6	223.5	243.3	19.8	8.9
U.S. Antarctic Program	48.4	51.1	55.0	3.9	7.6
Biological, Behavioral, & Social Sciences	141.8	156.2	173.5	17.3	11.1
Applied Science & Research Applications	55.1	62.8	62.4	0.4	0.6
Scientific, Technological & International Affairs	23.8	25.2	25.8	0.6	2.4
Program Development & Management	48.7	57.9	59.6	1.7	2.9
Total	$777.9	$844.4	$815.3	$70.9	8.4%

France: A Hard Look at Agricultural R&D

Paris. The major role that agriculture occupies in the French economy provides the basis for the serious questioning that is currently being directed at this country's extensive agricultural research activities.

Last summer, the general director of the National Institute for Agronomic Research (INRA)—the central agency for agricultural R&D in France—was dismissed and replaced by his assistant, Jacques Poly. Meanwhile, at the Ministry of Agriculture, there is a new chief of education and research, M. Malassis, who was appointed to the job by the Minister of Agriculture, Pierre Mehaignerie, an agronomist himself.

These changes, however, have not stopped the flow of questions that the government and the scientific community have been asking about the quality and efficiency of the R&D system in general and the INRA performance in particular.

When the Secretary of State for Science, Pierre Aigrain, launched his new R&D policy last September (SGR Vol. VIII, No. 18), he announced his intention to submit INRA to a "scientific audit," which is something altogether new in French scientific affairs. The audit, headed by M. Pelissier, president of the French National Railway System, was actually completed in December, whereupon the Minister of Agriculture decided that it would remain secret, which means that INRA will be in charge of reforming itself.

Be that as it may, the problems remain and everyone is quite aware of that fact. As INRA Director Poly himself has observed, French agriculture, after a remarkable post-World War II buildup from primitive conditions, has become an energy-voracious, high-technology industry. If the system continues to develop along the same lines, Poly predicts, only the north of France, for cereals, and Brittany, for cattle, will be able to earn their way by the year 2000.

The reality of French agriculture is that it is heavily subsidized with public funds. Though the actual statistics are confidential in a country that is proud of its peasants and their social values, it is estimated that, on the average, each farmer receives a grant of about $2500 a year. What this assistance indicates is that many sectors of French agriculture are unable to survive on their own—and it is clear that the situation will become even more difficult for them when Spain, Portugal, and Greece enter the Common Market. The solution, then, is for French agriculture to enhance its competitiveness through scientific and technical advances.

The need for this is apparent in regard to energy, which the French agricultural system consumes in vast quantities—all of it imported, as is a great deal of the feed for livestock.

So far, however, the agricultural research system has failed to respond to this situation. INRA's comparative studies of agricultural production in other countries—the US in particular—have been hushed up at the insistence of the farm lobby.

In this context of traditional agricultural conservatism, Jacques Poly set off something of a

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Academic R&D Gains Support

There has been a bit of "real" growth in financial support of academic research and development in recent years, according to a newly issued study by the National Science Foundation.

Academic R&D expenditures, the Foundation reports, totaled $4.1 billion in 1977—9 per cent above the previous year's figure, but, when adjusted for inflation, a mere 2 per cent gain. "Between 1970 and 1977," NSF noted, "the growth rate in academic R&D spending averaged 1.5 per cent per year in real terms, slightly ahead of total US R&D spending, which rose at an average rate of only 1 per cent during this period.

The top 20 universities in R&D expenditures in fiscal year 1977 were as follows, according to NSF:

	Total		Federal	
Institution	1977	Percent change, 1976-77	1977	Percent change, 1976-77
Total, all institutions	$4,064,220	8.9	$2,716,767	8.6
Total, leading 20 institutions	1,423,180	7.3	1,031,197	7.9
1. Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison	103,556	5.6	53,386	2.9
2. MIT	102,045	8.2	85.066	11.0
3. Univ. of Calif. San Diego	87,636	6.5	78,719	6.8
4. Univ. of Minnesota	82,679	10.1	48,409	7.5
5. Univ. of Michigan	79,922	1.0	50,908	3.4
6. Univ. of Washington	77,757	13.9	66,066	21.4
7. Stanford Univ.	77,019	5.9	71,115	6.2
8. Harvard Univ.	73,301	12.2	55,485	9.8
9. Columbia Univ.	72,948	8.9	58,973	10.1
10. Cornell Univ.	71,346	7.8	45,895	9.9
11. Univ. of Pennsylvania	70,721	1.5	47,313	2.6
12. Univ. of Calif.-Berkeley	70,148	3.2	50,197	2.6
13. Univ. of Calif.-Los Angeles	69,277	10.3	55,956	9.4
14. Johns Hopkins Univ.	61,858	8.0	50,445	5.8
15. Univ. of Chicago	59,332	7.7	46,109	7.7
16. Univ. of Illinois-Urbana	59,320	4.1	40,558	5.3
17. Univ. of Rochester	53,129	14.0	33,502	9.0
18. Texas A & M Univ.	51,810	10.2	21,757	22.1
19. Univ. of Texas-Austin	49,699	6.1	30,118	10.3
20. Univ. of Calif.-San Fransisco	49,677	3.9	41,220	1.2
Total, all other institutions	2,641,040	9.9	1,685,570	9.1

(Dollars in Millions)

. . . INRA Scientists Are an Exclusive Bunch

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political explosion when, a few days after taking over at INRA, he issued a report that called for "a more economical and autonomous agriculture" as a matter of government policy.

Poly offered five major proposals: (1) reductions in food importations, particularly of protein-rich commodities; (2) reduction in the energy input of agriculture; (3) development of labor-intensive agriculture in accompaniment to reduction of energy consumption; (4) promotion of ecologically sound and non-polluting agricultural techniques, and (5) recycling of vegetable wastes for animal feed and energy production.

Reflecting ambitious but rational objectives, the Poly proposals are seen by many specialists as being beyond the reach of an agricultural research system that is dominated by INRA. Founded in 1946, INRA has 1140 scientists among its 6900 employees, and a current annual budget of about $180 million. Its work is dispersed among 17 major centers and some 100 other facilities. None of these units possesses the critical mass that is required for a productive research effort.

Furthermore, INRA's staff exists under a special statute that holds it apart from the government's other research groups. In fact, INRA's researchers constitute what is probably France's most exclusive scientific community. They rarely mix professionally with other scientists; they almost never subcontract research to other institutions. It is generally felt that they confine themselves to their own ivory tower; moreover, their increased emphasis on fundamental research has widened the rift between them and the working farmers.

Poly's proposals are regarded as a first attempt to end INRA's splendid isolation from the realities of French agriculture, but how far he will get is by no means certain.

Secretary of State Aigrain, who initiated the audit, may be assumed to have been sympathetic to INRA Director Poly's view of the agency, since, as it turns out, the man Aigrain chose to conduct the study, rail chief Pelissier, is an old friend of Poly.

Nevertheless, with the Ministry of Agriculture sitting on the report, and INRA's oldtimers determined to retain their cushioned status, the odds for reforming French agricultural R&D do not appear to be favorable. —FS

Non-Faculty Research Report

The growing practice of employing PhDs as non-faculty researchers at universities is examined in a new report, *Nonfaculty Doctoral Research Staff in Science and Engineering in United States Universities.*

Prepared by a National Academy of Sciences committee chaired by Lee Grodzins, of MIT, the study reports that in 1977, non-faculty researchers totaled 4000 persons, which was about 3 per cent of all PhDs then employed in academe. It concluded that:

"The doctoral research staff group, while small in total number, is disproportionately important for research." Also, that "In many universities members of the groups consider themselves to be second-class citizens with respect to privileges and conditions of employment."

A limited number of copies of the report are available, without charge, from: Commission on Human Resources, National Research Council, 2101 Constitution Ave. Nw., Washington, DC 20418.

Second Rejection for OTA Post

For the second time, the Office of Technology Assessment has received an acceptance and then a rejection for its newly created post of Assistant Director and Chief Scientist. Last fall, Raymond Bowers, a Cornell physicist, accepted the job but then changed his mind (SGR Vol. VIII, No. 16). The post was then accepted by Gerald O. Barney, a physicist who is heading a White House study on population and resources. Barney originally expected to finish that job at the end of last year. But he's told OTA that it will take longer than expected and has declined the appointment.

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NIH: Carter Seeks to Hold Down the Budget

With the National Institutes of Health budgeted for a politically arousing $18-million *decrease* for FY 1980, it is more difficult than ever to assess what's going to happen to the agency's spending plans as they work their way through Capitol Hill.

As far as any major initiatives are concerned, the budget situation—plus the ongoing exercise to develop health-research principles (SGR Vol. IX, No. 1)—tend to promote caution on the Bethesda, Md., campus.

In a budget summary for the press, NIH's parent agency, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, makes reference to "continuing the 1979 funding level," and then goes on to list several new items related to HEW's Preventive Health Initiative. But it's all small change, as such things go at NIH: $2 million for the Cancer Institute "to study the relationship between diet, environmental chemicals, and cancer"; $3 million for the Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute to study the effects of diet and smoking on heart and lung diseases, and $5 million over two years, for Allergy and Infectious Diseases to expand its research on tropical diseases.

Still gagging on the extra $352 million that Congress voted for NIH last year, the Administration has decided that, rather than get into a political morass by seeking legislative permission to refrain from spending the whole sum, it will simply try to regard that money as a two-year appropriation; therefore, it is seeking no additional money for NIH in FY 1980. It is, however, planning to try to get some of that big and unwanted appropriation off its hands. For example, the HEW plan for 1980 calls for seeking a recission of a $37-million item for a child-health-research facility, the reason being that it is "considered low priority in a time of budget stringencies."

The Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA), which is responsible for carrying out Mrs. Carter's designs for improving mental-health services, is budgeted for a $91-million increase over its present budget of $1.1 billion—which isn't much of an increase. Mental-health research goes up by $27 million, to a total of $160 million.

Among the few big gainers in HEW's budget is the Center for Disease Control, for which the President is requesting $313 million for FY 1980, an increase of $43 million, or 16 per cent.

The Food and Drug Administration is scheduled for only a $7 million increase in its current budget of $314 million, which means that, financially, it will be thrown for a bit of a loss.

Since the guns versus butter conflict will, in large part, be fought around the HEW budget, there is no telling at this point how the final numbers will compare with budget requests.

Presidential budgets are often subjected to great transformations between the time they go up and come down from Capitol Hill. And, if there is any segment of the budget that is a prime candidate for Congressional reworking, it is the budget of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

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